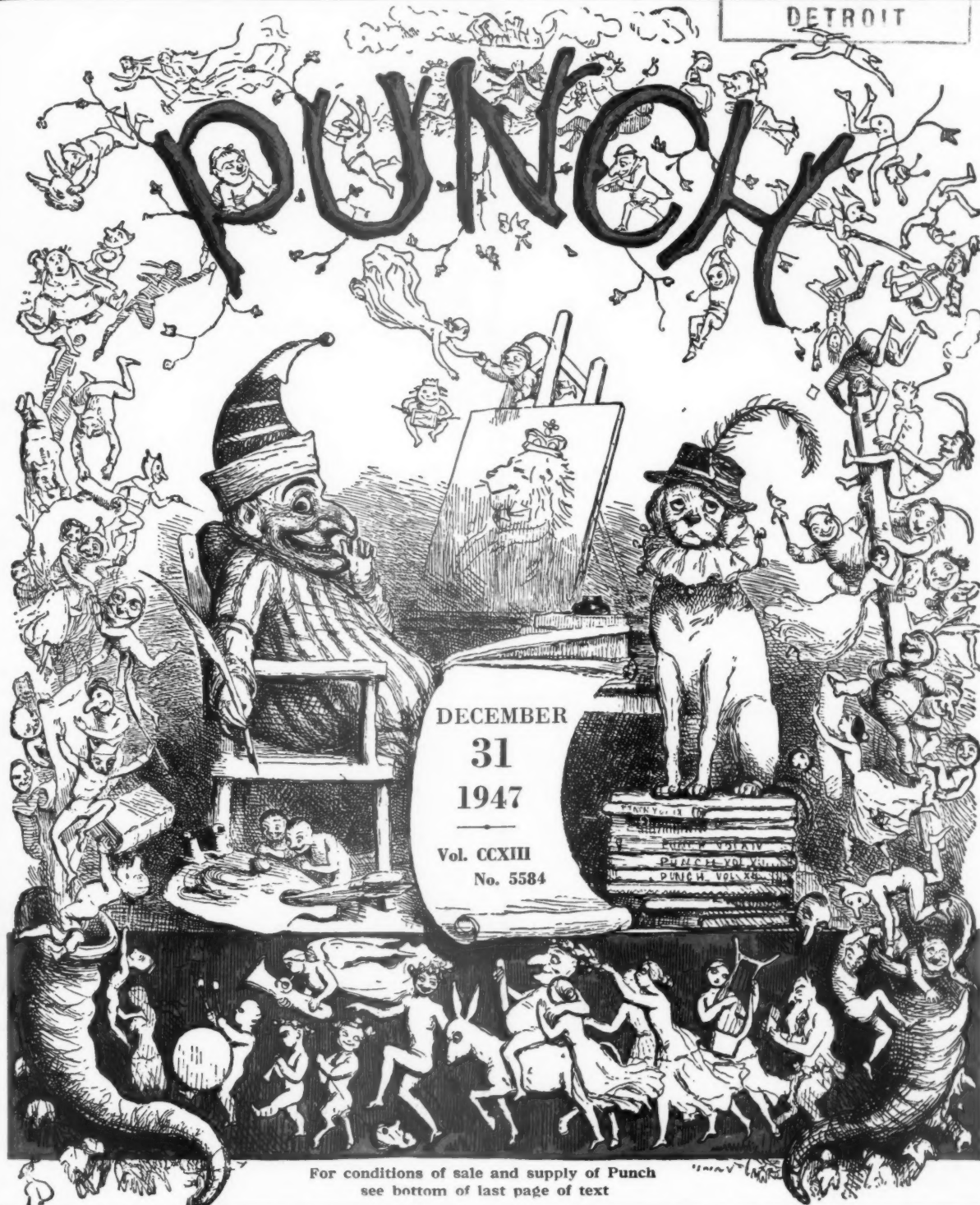


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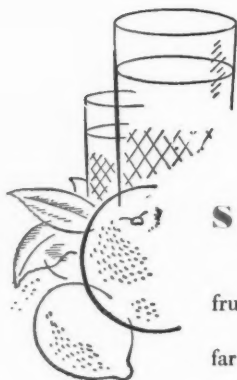
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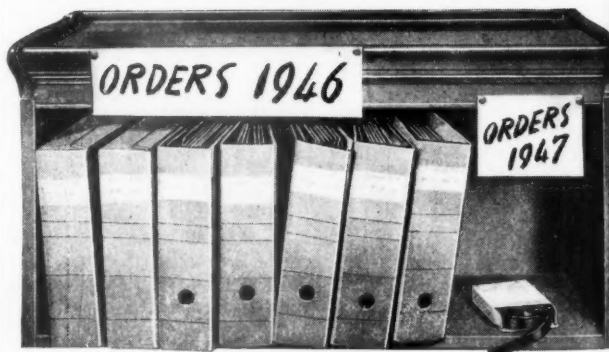
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In spite of first appearances, there are more orders shown here for 1947 than for 1946. The 1947 "file" takes up only a fraction of the space formerly necessary, because the firm in question decided to turn over to Micro-filming order records. By using the automatic Commercial Recordak camera they can get 3,000 of these on a 100 ft. roll of 16 mm. film.

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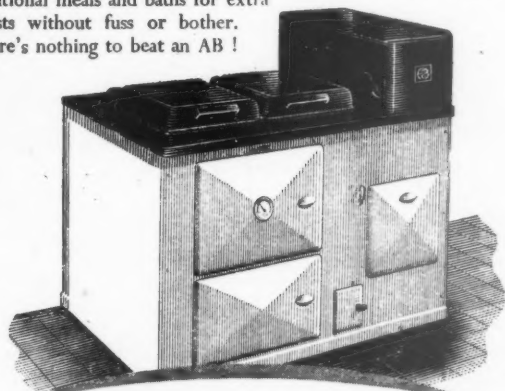
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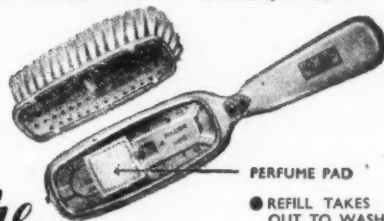
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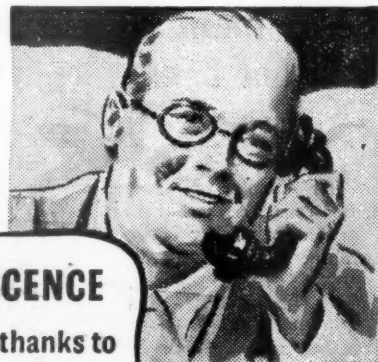
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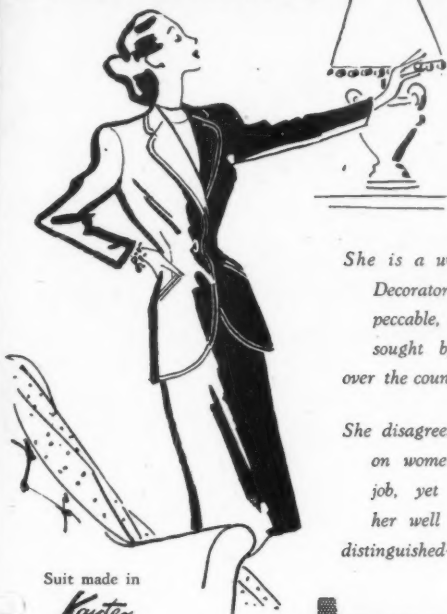
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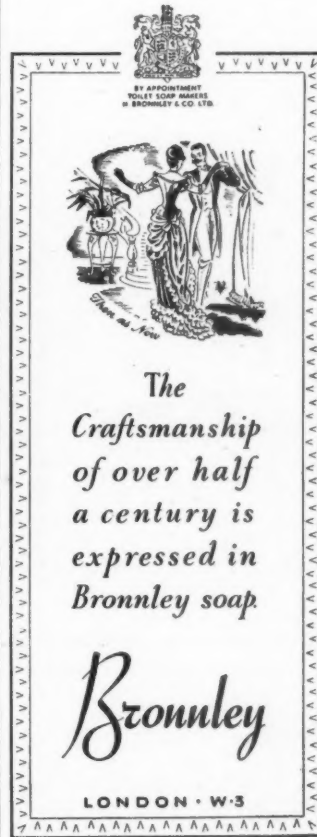
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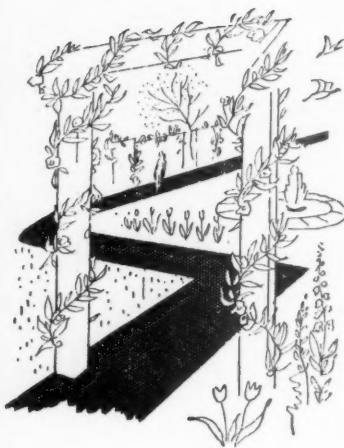


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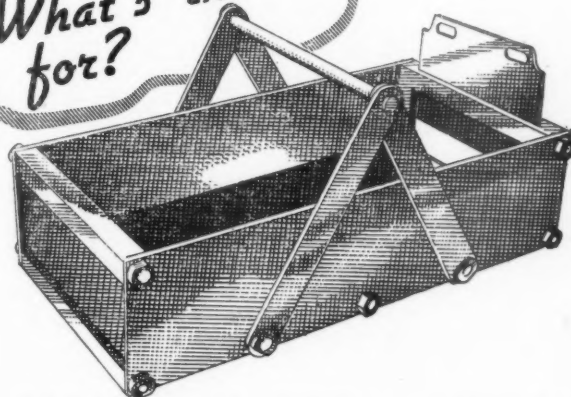
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It's an Etch Basket — 3 ft. x 1 ft. and has been used to carry metal parts for plating. After nine months it was still in service. This is pretty good going for an Etch Basket having to withstand the action of corrosive solutions.

TUFNOL has proved best. (Teak lasted only three or four days). TUFNOL is coming off best in all sorts of hard tests. It might help in your business.

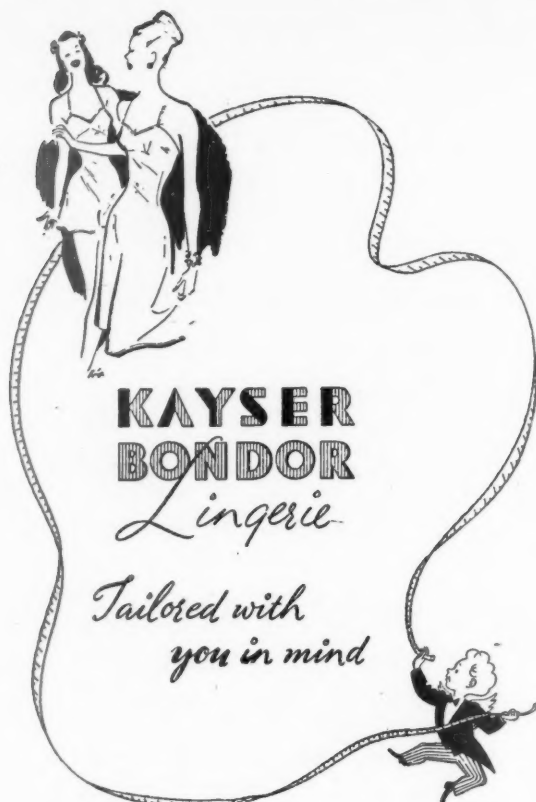
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ELECTRICAL INSULATOR... MADE IN SHEETS,
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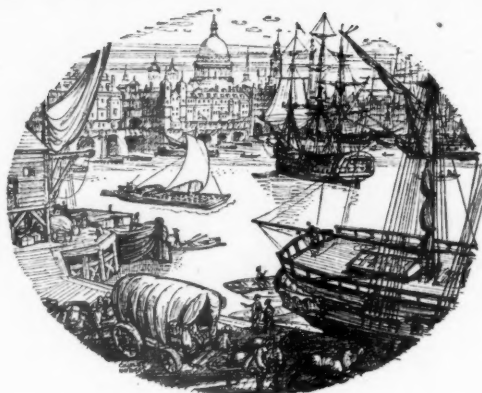
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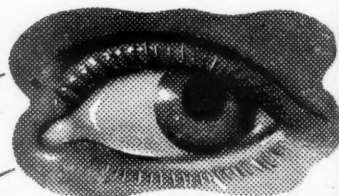


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OPTREX not only calms the congestion and irritation caused to the eyes, but in many cases seems to bring relief from the unpleasant effects of the cold itself. Try it and see.

Under existing conditions, many kinds of irritation can attack tired eyes. Prompt treatment with OPTREX can usually eliminate the possibility of serious trouble—and here are some handy first-aid tips. But remember—at the first sign of serious trouble, professional advice should be sought.

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The famous Optrex 'exclusive design' eye baths are on sale once more. Price 10d., including purchase tax. Optrex eye compresses are also obtainable.





RUNCH

Or

The London Charivari



Vol. CCXIII No. 5584

December 31 1947

Charivaria

We understand that many housewives have expressed their intention of staying up late to-night to see if the New Year has to queue up to come in.

A Canadian advises would-be emigrants to go to Canada if they are going anywhere. If they are not going anywhere they should turn back.

Many housewives, who have had difficulty in making the food go round this year, are now wondering what they are going to do about the extra day in 1948.

Impending Apology

"P.S.—I must apologize for my very bad English, which I learned during the nights of German occupation, listening to the B.B.C. communiqués."—From a letter to "The Motor."

An astrologer has published his reminiscences. It's a fascinating volume which describes his early struggles and takes readers right up to the time of his retirement from active astrology in 1949.

Informed circles report that Mr. Strachey is shortly going to the Lords with the title of Baron Larder.

"What will be the Film of the Year for 1948?" asks a critic. This week's trailer at your local cinema gives a definite hint.

Share-Out

"At the Hippodrome, Nottingham, Dennis Price made a personal appearance and presented the Lord Mayor with more than 100 food parcels from Australia. An informal dinner followed."

"The Cinema."



"FATHER XMAS SACKS
Containing Good Surprise Gifts
for Boys
REAL VALUE 6/6 EACH"
Shop notice.

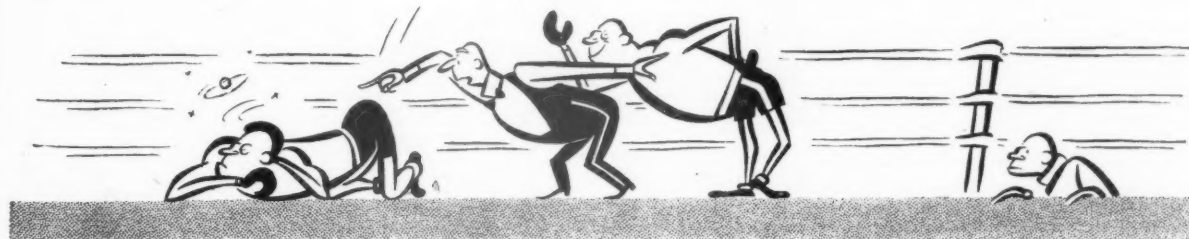
Yes, but what was the actual price?

There are to be A.R.P. refresher courses. This has caused an uneasy feeling among ex-Home Guards that the Government only lent them the boots.

A British film actor reports in a London daily that since he has been in Hollywood there have been three meatless days. Fans in this country are now sending food parcels.

"Song-writing moves with the times," claims a member of Plastic-Pan Alley.

According to an article in *The Field* the wings of a housefly make three hundred and thirty vibrations per second. No doubt Sir Stafford is arranging to have these figures stepped up the necessary 10 per cent.



H. J.'s Belles-Lettres

THIS Belle-Lettre is devoted to solving a problem which must have puzzled many of my readers; why I do not do more in the way of poetry. Very occasionally I may have been betrayed into rhyme, but only *en passant*. So, solicitous for my readers' peace of mind being what I am, I have devoted the whole of this Belle-Lettre to some approximations to a solution of the problem.

Take a line like this, which I wrote on the first page of a new and shiny commonplace book I bought at Nottingham Fair:

"Oh, but what lilies in a vase to see!"

This has quite clearly several of the characteristics of verse—metre, inversion, flowers, and being easier to scan than to analyse. It is a direct expression of an emotion, surprise I should classify it as, and it leaves you wondering what the second line will be about. The trouble was that it left me wondering too. The line came into my mind ready made and the rest of the poem remained in limbo. I began to doubt whether there really was any more or whether it was like those very short Oriental poems, in which the songster just gives "A," as it were, and the reader does all the rest of his work for him. This tendency of my poems not to get rounded off, "lack of finish" a critic would call it, is very hampering.

Another difficulty is getting a public. Roman poets used to read their works to patrons, but whenever I read my works aloud those present mark off the feet on their fingers, and my wife shouts such interruptions as "feminine ending" or "short weight," and this means the theme never gets noticed at the time and afterwards people insist it never had one. Selling poetry to periodicals sounds all very well, but people are so conventional and insist that all poems in the same periodical should be much the same. Here is a children's verse I wrote for *Wilkinson's Christmas Annual*:—

"Peter and Margery went out to tea
With the Suffragan Bishop of High Barbaree.
While their host stuck to pernod they ploughed
through risotto
And left about six with the Bishop quite blotto."

Here was no mere repetition of outworn themes, but they turned it down flat.

A similar fate overtook a little political verse I tossed off. I scanned it through carefully, saw to the cæsuras, and sent it to the *Political Quarterly*, a periodical you would imagine from the title would lap it up. Not a bit of it. Back it came with a note saying they were all for prose, a form in which it would be ruined, as you can see:

"Lord John Russell
Ever full of bustle
Got in a jam
By quarrelling with Pam,
Which was not the fate of Dizzy,
A politician equally, though more tactfully busy."

Another possible opening seemed to be guide-books, which often break into verse in the opening chapters. Here are some verses that got rejected from "Westmorland," "Devonshire (South)" and "The Potteries," after which I lost interest.

"My heart it is here and my song shall rehearse
Thy virtues, fair landscape, in durable verse.
Thy fame it shall mount on my back, and my poem
Shall broadcast thy merits until all men know 'em.

But greatest of these is thy power to inspire
Such an eminent poet to handle his lyre.
Preserved in my lines your renown shall live on,
Long after your friable surface is gone."

In fact almost the only way I can get rid of my poems is by writing them on boards with pokers and hanging them about the house. Here is the one from the guest-room:

"Rajahs get their rubies from
The jewelled heads of toads.
They hunt them down with crocodiles
That spy out their abodes.
The crocodiles would much prefer
To stay at home and sob.
But a rajah is a rajah
And a crocodile's a snob."

During my long and reluctant courtship of my wife it was sometimes necessary to find new fillings for my love-letters, and poesy seemed to fit the bill. The technical difficulties involved made it as much a hobby as a duty, and though from the point of view of literary profits it was a dead loss, a breach of promise suit would have cost more. Here is a little ditty I trolled one summer night as I sat digging the midges out of my typewriter and wondering what it would be like not to be a bachelor any more. Her reception of the effort was not encouraging.

"Come to my mill, oh my grist, and be kissed, you sweet
love-in-a-mist.
List how thy lover thee loves and desist
From moue-making, and twirling the fan on your wrist.
See the vist-
A ah me, what a view. Can it tempt you to venture
debenture,
Stock, share to my care. Will suspicion and malice
prevent yer?
What, ducky, no trust? Well, the moths will break in
then and rust and thus frust-
Rate your careful precautions. Confide we now each to
the other. Your mother,
Is she in this wood-pile the nigger, a cloud so much bigger
Than the hand of the man she has hooked for her daughter,
who looked
To be one of the family, prepared to invest any figure.
The moon will go soon, so then haste or embraced you will
not be by moonlight.
Confide me your purse or fare worse for my curse has no
merc-
Y."

Wedding Afterthoughts

I DO not know why
I
was not invited,
but I am delighted
to think
that my mink
and my tabby
were both at the Abbey,
and that
my hat
went to the Palace
with Aunt Alice. V. G.



THE WATCHMAN, 1948

"All might be very much worse, and a few austere bright spots in the morning sky."

Australia at Twickenham

IF you live in south-west London and your business takes you to Staines, Egham and places west there is a convenient short cut along the Chertsey by-pass, which skirts the Rugby Football ground at Twickenham. This fact will account for half the large number of cars that will be seen in the car parks on Saturday afternoon, when Australia play England. The remainder may well be expected to belong to people from Staines and Egham with business in south-west London. I mention this to allay the suspicions of spectators, who propose to cycle there from Ipswich, Doncaster, Bournemouth, etc., and perhaps do not realize how much business is transacted on Saturday afternoons in the untiring outer suburbs. For the remaining thirty or forty thousand who will be in the same compartment as myself from Waterloo I have no message, beyond a simple request not to push.

Last time the two countries met, during the 1908-9 Australian tour, England lost by one try to three. On Saturday this result will be reversed with a clear margin of seven points in England's favour.

This fearless prediction is based on the belief that England have a very good pack and that N. M. Hall will drop at least one goal. A pack which can dispense with the services of men like V. G. Roberts and H. H. Mills must be good; nor am I willing to believe that the chosen eight will fail to last the course. But the game, on all the evidence, will have to be won by the forwards. Barring accidents—under which head I would include a chance interception, or one of those remarkable dribbles down the wing that R. H. Guest sometimes produces—it is difficult to see the English backs scoring from long-range attacks. The Australian defence is immensely strong. Wales might conceivably have pierced it at Cardiff the other day, but for Jack Matthews' inability to hold his passes and a minor injury to Bleddyn Williams' knee which took the edge off his speed in the second half; but then England have no back the equal of Bleddyn Williams at his best, and no fly-half, for that matter, with the thrust and elusiveness of Glyn Davies. So my prayer is that the English forwards will take the ball into the Australian twenty-five and keep it there, with the idea of rushing it over the line themselves or, from suitably placed set scrums, heeling it back with the utmost expedition for Hall to deal with.

Naturally, if they fail to carry out my instructions, it will not be my fault if my forecast of the result comes unstuck.

Nobody is likely to under-rate the Australians at this stage. Observe their forwards assembled for a line-out and you will see in a moment that this is no schoolgirls' crocodile. Massive men these, and grim, and not to be pulled up except by the roots. R. MacMaster and D. H. Keller in particular are a fearsome sight to see in full career. Behind the scrum, at five-eighths and centre, there is a weakness, and the Australians know it. From orthodox three-quarter movements, provided their wings are closely marked, they are no more likely to score than their opponents, and their tactics are devised to overcome this lack of penetrative power in the centre. A sudden burst by the scrum-half, C. T. Burke, a very complete player, leads to quick interpassing among the forwards; or A. E. Tonkin, on the right wing, cuts inside to take a pass from Burke and make a man over; or they make use of the ballooned kick straight up field, with the pack in full cry to get under the ball when it comes down. They seem to like to unleash all these devices in quick succession, a crowded ten minutes of strenuous life, at the end of which their opponents are

dizzy with running in circles and conscious only that ten points have been rudely chalked up against them. Usually the Wallabies make this effort right at the end of the game, and time and again have won a lost match by means of it; but against Wales they staged it only fifteen minutes after the start of the second half—perhaps unwisely. At any rate, Wales fought the effort down, it petered out, and at the end Wales were going if anything more strongly than Australia. But there is no doubt that the blitzkrieg is a most formidable affair, and its outcome next Saturday will be awaited with agonized confidence by at least one spectator.

Whatever the result, one question is certain to remain unsolved in the minds of many as they fight their way to the station. Why are these Dominion tours crowded into the first half of our season, so that the home countries have to play the visitors with untired teams? There may be some compelling reason, but the impression left on the ignorant mind is that the visitors must be hustled out of the way by the beginning of January, so that we may be free to get on with the really important business of the home Internationals. I content myself with the mild observation that an England team that had already battled with Wales, Ireland and Scotland would be even more certain to defeat the Australians than the fifteen men who will open the English international season on Saturday. And if that is an English reaction, what is the view taken by the Scots who had to take the field against the Wallabies in November, a clear four weeks before their final game?

H. F. E.

A Shopper's Carol

I WANDERED carefree as a cloud
That floats on high o'er valleys and hills.
When I got home I saw a crowd,
A host, of undulating bills;
Beside my desk, as high as my knees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle round the universe
They stretched in never-ending line,
Those flowers upon Yuletide's hearse:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Each asking for a large advance.

Upon the things I danced, but they
Outdid my leaden feet in glee.
How could a poet hope to pay
Even one jocund company?
I gazed and gazed but little thought
What wealth would buy the things I'd bought.

And oft when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the hell of solitude;
And then my heart with terror fills
And trembles with the fluttering bills.

Myself versus The Iron Curtain

THE story of my gallant but unsuccessful attempt to break through the Iron Curtain can now be told in all its fantastic detail. It begins with a telephone call put through to the Soviet Embassy eight months ago and ends with my harrowing experience between eleven o'clock and noon this morning. Altogether there are six episodes.

I

"Is that the Russian Embassy?" I said, somewhat nervously.

"No."

"You're not Bayswater three-six-two-eight?"

"No."

I did some quick thinking.

"Would you mind telling me whether you're *anything* three-six-two-eight?"

"No."

"You're not Mr. Molotov by any chance?"

He rang off without answering. Now, I had no reason to suppose that the man was being purposely evasive, but I felt pretty certain that his accent was foreign. There was something queer about the way he dropped his voice at the end of an expletive. However, after thinking the matter over carefully I decided to let charity take its course.

II

The next day I wrote to the Soviet Embassy at 13 Kensington Palace Gardens, W.8. My letter was couched in the most diplomatic terms. "Gentlemen (or Comrades)," it began, "I am anxious to have my passport viséed for a tour of the U.S.S.R. where I intend to make a sympathetic and highly flattering study of social and economic conditions. Getting a visa out of the Americans is like trying to get blood out of a stone. They drove me almost insane last year with their interminable delays and petty bureaucracy. What a relief it is to know that this application will be received and handled with the utmost efficiency and dispatch! I enclose a stamped and addressed envelope together with a few old roubles which have been lying around uselessly in my desk for years..."

By return post I received my answer—or, rather, my copy of a neatly-printed circular consisting solely of regrets.

III

My next move was to take Rigsworth out to lunch. Rigsworth is an old school-friend who works in some department at the Foreign Office—or

"the F.O.," as it is known to intimates. I explained the situation and he agreed to "have a talk with the chief and see whether any wires can be pulled." The luncheon cost me almost a week's salary and stirred up painful memories of Harlsbury Priory in the 'twenties.

A month later Rigsworth was "able to inform" me that a visa was out of the question. The Russians (he said) were anxious to save foreign investigators the trouble and expense of travelling in the U.S.S.R. and had arranged for factual and statistical material relating to social and economic conditions in their country to be available in London. They had assured Rigsworth's chief that archival activities in Moscow would be no more fruitful than in London and that it would serve no useful purpose if...

IV

Discouraged but not yet defeated I wrote to the Soviet Monitor (Tass Agency) at The Lodge, Oakleigh Park. Here is the latter half of the letter:

"... Moreover, you will not need to look twice at the enclosed photograph to realize that my public appearance in Russia would be of inestimable value to your propaganda-machine. It is my misfortune that I bear a striking facial resemblance to the Russian conception of a decadent democrat (in fact I am often referred to jokingly among my friends as 'Mr. Decadent Democracy,



"... and the bridesmaids were in heavenly pale blue export rejects with bats to match."

1947') and lend credibility to all manner of unworthy generalizations. I shall be surprised if you do not jump at this offer. With comradely greetings, yours sincerely..."

I received no reply whatever.

V

In desperation and swift succession I now applied for the posts (advertised in *Krokodil*) of Deputy Commissar for Caucasian Sunflower Production, vodka taster to the Gorky Politbureau and secretary to the Omsk and District Power Commissariat. Receiving no answers I tried to enlist in the Siberian Foreign Legion and the Black Sea Fleet. My applications were ignored.

VI

And then I decided upon my last desperate throw.

"Is that Wilkinson and Potter, the furniture removers?" I said breezily.

"No, this is the Russian Embassy."

"Oh, I'm sorry you've been roubled, but I dialled Hansom three-two-two-O and... Did you say the Soviet Embassy? Well now, there's a bit of luck if you like! I was going to ring you shortly to confirm our arrangements about a visa. If you can spare a moment or two?"

I waited for an answer. The only sound was of heavy breathing at the other end of the line—heavy, regular and slightly asthmatical.

"Hullo!" I said anxiously, "are you still there?"

The heavy breathing continued. I listened absordedly for several minutes.

"Are you still there?" I shouted.

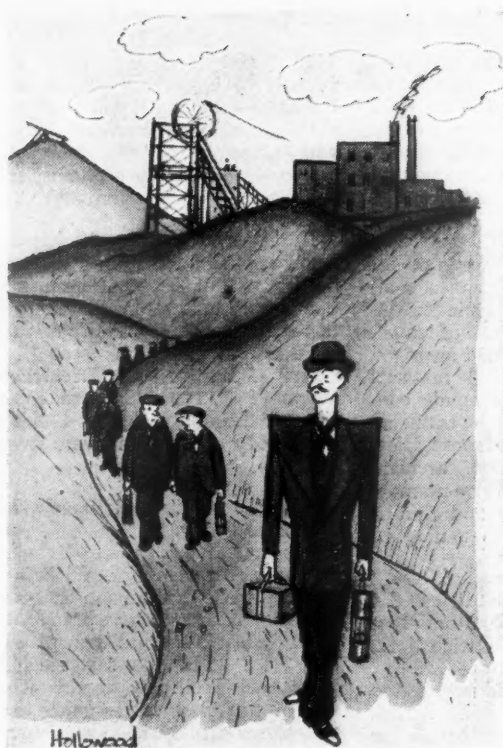
It was most unnerving. I can tell you, standing there *tête-à-tête* with the unseen, listening to the steady sough of its breath.

"Hullo," I almost screamed, "have we been cut off?"

It was a ridiculous question, revealing my intense discomfort and mounting fear. I gripped the receiver so fiercely that my knuckles stood out like blanched almonds against the jet black of the bakelite. The squiggly little vein at my temple—the one beloved of all novelists—throbbed and pounded. The thing behind the ear-piece was now some monster, some disembodied fiend. I could feel its hot breath on my face.

"Speak to me!" I moaned.

The rusty windscreen-wiper shuttled stertorously back and forth, back and forth... back and forth... And then I suddenly pitched forward on to my face in a dead faint. They are still trying to bring me round. Hod.



"He's been in London with the 'Miner Comes to Town' exhibition."

Comic Retorts

or Fun in a Laboratory

ALL those immoderately laughing men there—who can they be? I'll lay you six to four they're Scottish chemists.

We ought perhaps to begin—I refuse to discuss any change in the odds—by defining our terms, or you will be thinking that by *chemist* I mean *pharmacist*. It is hard sometimes for us scientists, or us people who have so recently been reading a scientific book that we still feel (no matter how we look or sound) as if we were trailing clouds of erudition, to remember . . . well, I should hope that by this time you know the end of that sentence without my having to slave away at finishing it. Anyway, bear in mind that *pharmacist* is the right word for the man who keeps what is called a chemist's shop; the *chemist* is the scientist, the research worker, the back-room boy, the boffin, the man who is (for instance) ultimately responsible for the stuff in all those delightful and appalling bottles and jars which the pharmacist merely sells you over the counter or declares that he hasn't so much as seen since 1941. It is the chemist at whose alleged mirthfulness I am about to look askance. (If I said anything either one way or the other about the mirthfulness of pharmacists, we should only get indignant letters. I'll lay you six to four we get some even now.)

The book I have been studying is by Professor John

Read, F.R.S., and is called *Humour and Humanism in Chemistry**; and his contention in it is that "Humour is indeed the golden thread which runs through the whole tapestry of chemistry." My reaction to this statement is the guarded admission that Well, it's a point of view. It all depends, I must say, on what you mean . . . Not only by *chemistry*, but by *humour*. The book—it is a big fat book, with a great many pictures—is in fact, rather less an account of Humour in Chemistry, as you might at first be led to suppose, than a history of chemistry written with the emphasis on certain entertaining oddities. The professor dedicates it to his pupils, among the least satisfactory of whom I am, in a way, entitled to range myself. Not that I ever sat at his feet at St. Andrews University, but years ago I learnt various things about atoms and molecules from his little book on explosives, and even remembered them long enough to write about them in these pages.

I don't remember them now; but since 1943 the atom has turned a little . . . *sour*, don't you think? That "the electron and the positron are direct descendants of Isis and Osiris" (a thought-provoking conclusion to which the author is led on page 7) does not really reconcile me to the atomic bomb, though I suppose it's better than nothing.

You may be tempted to ask what chemists—whose atomic preoccupations are presumably less only than those of physicists—find, in these days, to laugh at. What's so funny? The rest of us in our unthinking way can see something amusing in the mere names of certain actors or performers on the chemical stage, such as the inimitable and all but unpronounceable pair of cross-talk comedians, Methylethylthetine Bromide and Methylphenylselenetine Bromide (page 288); but the chemist is handicapped by knowing what they are. Indeed, he is probably struck all of a heap for a moment or two by the thought of the experiments (Cambridge, 1909) connected with the preparation of "the selenium analogue of the first of these substances," which involved what the author prettily calls a "sensational odour." Let us hasten to windward of this subject and its fragrant associations.

It may be that Scottish chemists are more cheerful than any others. Before I read this book I was shamefully unaware of the pronounced Scottish flavour about the whole subject: from alchemy, through "chymistry" (the name Professor Read uses for "the transition from alchemy to chemistry, falling in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries") to the point at which "Chemistry Sublimes into Drama" on page 339, Scotland is continually cropping up. Offhand, would you expect to find at the end of a big fat book on chemistry a Glossary, beginning with *A'*, meaning all, and ending with *Yin*, meaning one, and including not only *Kenspeckle* (conspicuous), but *Fu'*, full, and *No'*, not? Admittedly this is there to help you with the "pure flight of fancy" with which the book ends—"The Nobel Prize, a Chemic Drama in One Act"—but even so it is hardly the sort of matter about which one would lay six to four. Obviously Professor Read is all out to shake off the reproach of Baeyer (1835–1917) that "so many chemists are lacking in imagination." Besides this Drama at the end of the book he gives us a baffling cricket-match at the beginning, "Hermes Trismegistos' XI v. The Rest," in which Cleopatra (who qualifies as a chemist because she "studied the action of vinegar on pearls") did not bat but caught and bowled Jupiter, Pythagoras, Noah (capt.) and Osiris. Oh, there's enough imagination in the book to float a considerably less volatile subject; there is enough

* Published by G. Bell & Sons at 21/-

humour to incarnadine the bluest litmus paper, by main force. But all the same . . .

It is full of portraits of illustrious historical chemists. On the whole they look a remarkably good-natured lot, and nearly all of them remind me of somebody. Glauber (1604-1670)—yes, *the* Glauber—to be sure considered his contemporaries envious, wicked and ungrateful and complained of the deceit and dishonesty of servants; but there were very likely chemical reasons for that. Boerhaave (1668-1738) was, according to Johnson, "always cheerful, and desirous of promoting mirth by a facetious and humorous conversation."

All honour to Boerhaave. The thought of him emboldens me to say (just as I leave) that the chemist, unlike the physicist, knows enough to come in out of the uranium.

R. M.

The Headmaster

WITH us ther was the maister of a scole
That had a gounne as blak as any cole,
And ther-withal up-on his heed a
square;

Swich glowing ye had he as a hare,
That sparklede lyk the sterres, soth to seye.
Of lerning coude he al the nexte weye,
And was of scole-maistres alderbest;
In philosophye was ful much his lest.
He had wȝthin his reule and his manage
Four hundred girles¹ of unevene age;
And ther-withal he rekned wel his rente,²
For by hir age he wan his incremente:
If that hir yeres were fiftene or more,
Then of his poyntes wolde he han galore;³
His fee was al accordaunt to hir yeres.
Up-on his browes he had a toft of heres
That bristled as it were a porpentine;
Ther nas no pleye, ne sleight, ne no covyne⁴
That he ne coude nat quellen with a glance;
Of pranks coude he al the olde dance.
Up-on ure pilgrimage he rood al one;
With him ne dorste no man pikke a bone,
But oft at nihte, in ure hostelrye,
He wolde rede bokes of gramarye,
And proven wel his lore, and lude speke;
Of Latyn had he fewe⁵ termes and Greke.
In lerning coude he sette hem al the pas,
And yet he semed wiser than he was.
Up-on his stoffed gounne he had with-alle
A yalwe hood; I noot how men him calle.

¹Boys and girls, as elsewhere in Chaucer.

²Income.

³Plenty, abundance: the first recorded occurrence of this word in English. The passage is somewhat obscure, but Professor Zuzen-dorf quotes from a contemporary document: "If that in the scole ther be any scolers of age upward of xv yeres, then shal the maistre be given certayne poyntes or markes for ech scoler accordaunt to his age, the more poyntes as it groweth to xviii, and his fee shal be rekned by the somme of the poyntes accordingly." (Burnham Collection, ix, 47.)

⁴Deceit.

⁵A few.



I O N I C U S

From the Chinese

The New Year

IN China
We are not accustomed
To long periods
Of prosperity and peace.
Indeed,
If things go well
For a year or two,
There are banners,
Processions,
Bonfires,
Fireworks,
Or, as we call them,
"English crackers";
And joyous orations
Are made by the Principal
Persons.
The normal cycle
Of unrest and rebellion,
Hunger and war,
Is about eighty years.
During this time
Either there is no rice,
Or the rice is taken
By tyrants
And their troops:
Floods,
Famine,
Rapine,
Foreign invaders,
Domestic strife
Are the usual thing.
The common man,
Unless he lives
More than eighty years,
Is unlikely to enjoy
A moment's peace.
The present cycle
Of doubt and disturbance
Has endured
For fifty years only.
Therefore, with contentment,
We all look forward
Thirty years,
For then, without doubt,
There will be banners,
Bonfires,
And jubilant speeches
For a short space.
Meanwhile,
When the Western peoples
Excite themselves
About the ending
Of a single year
And the beginning
Of another,
And to their neighbours
Fervently express the hope
That the next 365 days
May bring them
Exceptional benefits,
We are astonished,
For what is a year
In the life of Man?
Nothing.
It is as one small bubble

On the broad bosom
Of the Yangtse River.

Nevertheless,
If in this way
The Western peoples
Can refresh the spirit,
Who are we
To say a discordant word?
And if it will bring them comfort
We gladly wish them
A Happy New Year.

The Celebration

AT this season
Do I feel in my bosom
An exceptional glow
Of humility,
And aspiration?
Do I regard
My fellow-creatures
With unusual benevolence,
And take more care
To treat them kindly,
To smile at strangers,
And forgive my enemies?
No, no.
I am like that
All the time. A. P. H.

At the Circus

TO come away best pleased with
a turn about an old motor-car, a
mere galumphing lump of metal,
seemed more than a little ungrateful
to the five sorts of animal, to say
nothing of the human branch of the
family, which had generously gone out
of their way in Bertram Mills' Circus
at Olympia to give us joy; and I felt
puzzled and unhappy about my preference,
my vast delight in, CAVAL-
LINI'S CRAZY CAR, until suddenly it
struck me that a vintage Model T Ford,
even without the physical eccentricities
of CAVALLINI's, was no more a motor-
car than a whale is a fish. It was a
warm-blooded creature; I could remem-
ber one which was never less than
red-hot. It was a thing of moods and
fire, of deep individuality and rumbling
primeval instinct. It responded to
kindness and understanding as no
other machinery had ever done. In
short it had a heart, and for this
cogent reason I make no further
apology for moving CAVALLINI and his
magnificently funny vehicle to the top
of my personal bill. Their act is
based on the solid principle of infernal
combustion. Insubordinate, eruptive,
disintegrating, the veteran strands its
master and his party in the middle of
the ring until, magic moment, he kicks
it in his fury squarely on the nose and
life re-enters its ancient vitals with a

roar. The fact that CAVALLINI is
dressed as if on his way to some kind
of Neapolitan Ascot adds greatly to
the effect.

The brothers MILLS may be relied
on to put our hearts in our mouths
while they are inserting a crick in our
necks. This year we have THE FEAR-
LESS TRIO DE RIAZ, who are whizzed
round the dome by a Spitfire to give
an extra edge to their incredible
gymnastics; TRISKAS WHITE DEVILS,
pole-carrying high-wire merchants
whose motor-cycle is stopped and
restarted in mid-air; and DARITA and
ANITA, two very charming girls, even
upside down, which is how we mostly
see them. These three turns are all
five-star thrills. What I always
wonder is how these superhumans feel
on a wet Monday morning. You can't
pretend to work on a high-wire, as we
can down below. Our respected and,
may I say, beloved old friends the six
lady elephants are as sagacious as ever,
performing some very old-fashioned
dances for us and standing com-
panionably on their heads. VICTOR
JULIAN'S DOGS AND MONKEY are
trained to the flick of a tail and could
see most Brains Trusts off the premises.
Also I thought highly of a juggler
called EDOUARDO, whose powers over
a rubber ball are not earthly, of THE
FLYING BRICKBATS, pneumatic acro-
bats, and of COCO, HUXTER, MICHAEL
AND Co., who empty pails of water in
the classic manner down each other's
trousers. RHODIN'S SEA-LIONS were
animated on the opening afternoon by
a slightly Cominform spirit, which will
doubtless pass.

If I have left the horses to the end
it is because no visitor to Olympia can
fear a deficiency of curved and scin-
tillating rumps, of proud paces and the
gallant execution of intricate measures.
The sixteen MILLS Liberties are superb
beasts, seen apparently through a
magnifying glass, sculptors' horses in
muscle and carriage, only a good deal
more like horses. Their discipline is
absolute. And I was glad to find the
CUMBERLANDS were still there. They
use two tremendous white steeds as fast-
moving mattresses on which to display
extraordinary acrobatic judgment.

One small criticism of a mighty good
circus containing many other ripe
turns which I have no space to describe:
it is a little short of the laughs that
hurt. CAVALLINI and the COCO boys
are sure-fire, but they are both in the
second half. It lacks an outstanding
personality among the clowns, a
buffoon of the calibre of Emmett
Kelly; but Emmett Kellys, and I
know it, do not grow on every tree.

ERIC.



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"Of course, we're still frightfully pleased with it, but dare I ask you to make a trifling alteration to the architectural background?"

The Independent Comet

A COMET sat and combed his beard
Till the sparks flew out in showers.
"I reckon," he said, "what I'm doing now
Should puzzle astronomers."
He sat on the uttermost rim of space,
Where infinity begins;
He nodded to passing nebulae
And he touched his hat to suns.

He picked his teeth with a cosmic ray
And he played at draughts with a moon,
And he dipped his mug in the Milky Way
And drank, like a spiv or a drone.

He said "I haven't a care in the world
And I haven't a care in the sky.
Let the telescopes wait; I intend to be late,
Till the experts wonder why."

He combed his beard till the sparks flew out,
Ruby and sapphire and green,
And the good little stars got out of the way
Or threaded a path between.
He said "I should like to read the news
On the night that I don't appear,
When astronomers all deliver their views
And I sit laughing here."



"Cheer up, Joe—ten minutes more and we'll be getting paid time-and-a-quarter."

The Painter of Arles

THE sunflowers, the chair, the cornfield, these and other familiar pictures of Van Gogh's last tormented years in Arles and St. Rémy—which have had such a profound, and some would hold such a disastrous effect on modern painting—are all included in the Art Council's exhibition of Van Gogh's paintings and drawings which remain on view at the Tate until January 14th. But these products of a fierce creative energy and distorted vision are far from typical of the artist's earlier work, and it will be a revelation to many visitors to observe his successive influences through the Dutch, Parisian and Provençal periods of his career, which, though it covered only the decade of the 'eighties, was more productive than Cézanne's forty years of unceasing labour.

Indeed, one need look no farther than the first gallery, where the drawings and water-colours are grouped, to observe the remarkable changes in style and outlook revealed in the tentative industrial scenes inspired by Millet (1880), an atmospheric crayon drawing of the Boulevard de Clichy (1887), and the last passionate drawings with a reed pen in the hospital garden of St. Rémy.

Passing from the low-toned paintings of the Dutch period in the Octagon into the farther galleries is like stepping out of a dark café into the distorting glare of some southern place. Van Gogh's sombre palette has been

abandoned, and the influence of the impressionists is next apparent in his works of the Paris period. Some paintings in the pointilliste technique—the "Bunch of Flowers," for example—as well as a number inspired by Japanese prints, also belong to these two years.

In 1888 we enter on the last phases: the echoes of Gauguin, the writhing landscapes painted with long strokes of a brush loaded with pure colour, the final tragic portraits—yes, all, all are here, the old familiar faces.

Van Gogh was an inspired simpleton; a visionary who rejected all the canons of accepted belief. The tragedy is that he has bequeathed not his mastery (the mastery of "The Cedar Walk") to a few, but his mannerisms to the many. Can our young students ever be persuaded that some undulating brush-strokes fail to solve a problem Constable spent a life-time in mastering? "Hm! I wonder!"

N. A. D. W.

Lines Written After an Overdose of French Novels

It is part of the punctilio
For a French hero to cry like billy-ho
When he receives a rebuke.
It is also *de rigueur* to kiss women on the *nuque*.



TOO FAITHFUL BY HALF

"But I insist that you *should* desert me, Mrs. Micawber."

NEITHER Mr. MICHAEL REDGRAVE nor Miss ENA BURRILL are at home in the production of *Macbeth* at the Aldwych, where a number of minor virtues scarcely makes up for a failure to make the big scenes shake us. Mr. REDGRAVE, so polished and delightful an actor in parts less stark and feudal, is physically too light for *Macbeth* and when he tries to bend his voice to the rough explosions of a chieftain's agony and anger it suffers, with the poetry. Nor is Miss BURRILL, who plays the blood-smeared hostess with a cold detachment curiously reminiscent of the Garbo, able to lose herself enough to release the whole flood of passion. She is sinister without being terrifying, rather like a beautiful spy who has somehow got herself mixed up with the barbarities of Scottish politics while leaving her heart for export. It is a carefully calculated performance of serpentine smoothness, but it remains unvaryingly in focus and never really takes fire. Even in the sleep-walking scene there is little perceptible remorse; and the wracked figure on the stairs is much more a criminal miserably near detection than a woman inwardly aware of what she has done. Where the murder scenes fall short, too, is that neither in *Macbeth* nor his lady does the consciousness of guilt and horror appear to reach the soul.

The banquet scene might have been effective if the producer, Mr. NORRIS HOUGHTON, had not handicapped himself by placing the guests on the other side of a cumbrous platform set in the middle of the stage, so that *Macbeth* seems, at any rate from the stalls, to be needlessly apologizing to a row of disembodied heads. It is on the far side of the same platform that, later, *Macbeth's* own head is disembodied, when the steady rise and fall of the sword gives the impression of a niblick losing a battle in a bunker. *Banquo's* ghost is of the solid variety, bolted like anything, as personally I like it. The witches are a little nebulous. The production is at its best in the scenes of movement, where the fights are hotly contested and there is a persuasive air of martial

At the Play

Macbeth (ALDWYCH)—*The Relapse, or Virtue in Danger* (LYRIC, HAMMERSMITH)—*Kate Kennedy* (MERCURY)

urgency. *The King* is in courteous hands with Mr. PAUL STEPHENSON, and *Malcolm* and *Banquo* are taken well by Mr. LEONARD WHITE and Mr. MICHAEL GOODLIFFE; but Mr. CLEMENT McCALLIN misses a good deal of *Macduff's* tragedy. A small part played quite beautifully is Miss MARGOT VANDER BURGH's *Gentlewoman* of the sleep-walking scene. Mr. PAUL SHERIFF takes

brings off the entire jest to a nicety. The part of *Sir Novelty Fashion*, the fop buying his way up the social ladder, might have been written, down to the last word, for Mr. CYRIL RITCHARD, who is given a fantastic quiverful of oaths of the Slit-me-Windpipe variety which he fires off with dazzling aplomb. He burlesques the burlesque, but he does it so beautifully that to carp would indeed be ungrateful. The basic theme is of course elegant seduction, but VANBRUGH varies the formula with a lady whose virtue proves as triumphant as her charm, and with visits to a caricature of a country house where life is a comic nightmare of grotesque knockabout. Messrs. ANTHONY IRELAND, ESMOND KNIGHT and PAUL SCOFIELD make a formidable trio of heartbreakers; and whereas Miss MADGE ELLIOTT has to succumb, and does so most gracefully, Miss AUDREY FILDES has not, and brings to her refusal a depth of feeling which strikes a strangely tender note in such company. Mr. HAMLYN BENSON's earthy monster of a squire, Mr. RICHARD WORDSWORTH's desiccated pander and Miss JESSIE EVANS' wonderfully coltish hoyden all add very much to the fun. I may be old-fashioned, but it seems to me that VANBRUGH has a rather refreshing straightforwardness compared with some of the other dramatists of his period. There is nothing suggestive about him. He is candour itself.



[Kate Kennedy]

WHAT HAS BECOME OF KATE?

Sinbhan, her Nurse Miss ELEANOR ELDER
Alexander Montgomerie Mr. NIGEL STOCK
Bishop Kennedy Mr. WILFRID WALTER

us on an extensive tour of the Highlands, in backcloths of John Piperish colouring.

If you are easily shocked or have children in tow you had better not go to *The Relapse, or Virtue in Danger*, at the Lyric, Hammersmith, but otherwise I commend it heartily as an entertainment which it would be a thousand pities to miss. Sir JOHN VANBRUGH must have been a grand fellow. To have warmed oneself up for the building of Blenheim and the Haymarket Theatre by writing such a first play as this shows greatness. It is Restoration comedy with an interlining of farce, and Mr. ANTHONY QUAYLE's production

quiet charm but there is not enough in the story to last out three acts and the language is not exciting. Based, speculatively, on a traditional rag at St. Andrews, it describes a fifteenth-century romance between a student and the bishop's cloistered niece. The youth impersonates her so that she can escape to a party, and his capture by the kindly bishop follows. This is mildly amusing, as the subsequent wooing is mildly romantic; but mild is the word. Miss SHELAGH FRASER, Mr. WILFRID WALTER, Mr. NIGEL STOCK and Miss ELEANOR ELDER give the play a fair showing. ERIC.



"Ethelred, dear, here are the Danegelt men again. They want you to beat your last year's target if you can."

At the Opera

Die Fledermaus (SADLER'S WELLS)

DIE FLEDERMAUS, by JOHANN STRAUSS, in its new production at Sadler's Wells bumps its nose rather oftener than the average bat. Its gay and inconsequential plot, compound of intrigues and flirtations borne rippling along on a stream of lilting waltzes and sprightly polkas, and pervaded with that air of elegant sensuality so typical of Viennese operetta, should make a light and brilliant entertainment—just as a mixture of sponge cakes and custard, redolent of raspberries and sherry and topped with whipped cream and nuts should make a delicious trifle. But something has gone wrong. A suggestion of fish-and-chips has crept into this confection, and for all JAMES ROBERTSON's efforts with the baton the cream refuses to be whipped and remains lumpy.

MARJORIE SHIRES, as *Adele* the maid, is the best Straussian in the cast. She sings beautifully and acts with vivacity

and style. BLANCHE TURNER as *Rosalinda*, however, lacks vocal charm and lightness of touch. ARNOLD MATTERS, in his old part of *Frank*, Governor of the Gaol, was excellent, and so was VALETTA IACOPI as the millionaire *Prince Orlovsky*. But JOHN WRIGHT's facetious *Eisenstein*, ROWLAND JONES's pantomime *Alfred* and EDMUND DONLEVY's throaty-sounding *Falke* were quite out of the picture. HOWELL GLYNNE, in his famous rôle of *Frosch*, the drunken gaoler afflicted with bunions, was a delight. His complicated evolutions, his deliberate and Agag-like walk as he retrieves his lantern or finds the front door, his efforts to draw his sword and, having at last drawn it, to replace it in its sheath are the funniest moments in the show.

HEDLEY BRIGGS is both the producer and designer. His bustle-period costumes and his settings are effective in themselves, but their rather solid colourings do not suggest the froth and the bon-bons of STRAUSS. The choreographer of the "Blue Danube" ballet is ANTHONY BURKE. D. C. B.

Dry-Point

NOT Jack, but his second-cousin old Hoar Frost turns out the better dry-points, for Jack's line is rigid and his detail too ornate where Hoar Frost's is both strong and feathery-fine.

December sky's his proper copper-plate—
against its hardness
how he loves to etch
the naked thorn-twigs
sharp and delicate—
where Jack
with his cruder art
would boldly sketch
a window-pane with crystallized arabesques—
or cut a barley-sugar-stick waterfall.
No blade of grass in the foreground is too small
to be tooled;
no gable end of the ugliest barn
his burin will not touch to beauty as
lonely and magic as a mountain tarn.
R. C. S.



"We could have got him for half that before the war."

Our Booking Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Henry James

How Henry James struck those who came into contact with him is the subject of *The Legend of the Master* (CONSTABLE, 12/6), which consists of opinions and impressions collected from articles, memoirs, published correspondence, and so on. The editor, Mr. SIMON NOWELL-SMITH, has done his work extremely well, combining great skill in assembling his material with a discriminating assessment of the varying reliability of his chief witnesses. Mrs. Thomas Hardy, he points out in his introduction, was prejudiced against Henry James because of what he wrote to R. L. Stevenson about "Tess"; Mr. E. J. Nadel was biased by his disapproval of James's anglophilia; E. F. Benson was handicapped by a tendency to embroider his recollections, F. M. Hueffer by a tendency to invent them, and George Moore by a tendency to forget them. James's conversational style often suggests a cultured Micawber, as in "Yes, yes, the little creature [his canary] sings his song of adoration each morning with—er—the slightest modicum of encouragement from me." This comically endearing trait is best caught by Edith Wharton in her account of motoring into Windsor with James, and by Hugh Walpole in the picture of James advising two children what sweets to buy. The uncertainty and frustration behind his ample impressive manner appear most clearly in Desmond MacCarthy's account of a walk one summer night across the Romney marshes, and in the words which, as James told a friend, he seemed to hear a voice utter just before his final stroke—"So here it is at last, the distinguished thing!"

H. K.

Spanish into American

The sagacity and brilliance of Professor SALVADOR DE MADARIAGA's *Rise of the Spanish American Empire* are excelled in its sequel. *The Fall of the Spanish American Empire* (HOLLIS AND CARTER, 21/-) covers three centuries of Spanish, Creole, Indian, Negro and *mestizo* development, opening with a masterly survey of the type of *conquistador* and friar which—with the Spanish Crown, for better or worse, at its back—was originally uppermost in the matter. The author has striven to keep an even keel in this racial, political and theological welter. Given equal human decency, he seems to prefer *conquistadores* to friars, though the exploits of the former are as dated as "The Talisman" while those of the latter are still exemplary. His sound contention that the best *conquistadores* were the worst, destroying native culture and the tempo of native existence, contrasts oddly with his distaste for Rousseau, who did perceive, however romantically, the point of the simple life. By the end of the eighteenth century the French Revolution, the expulsion of the Jesuits, the intervention of Jewry, Freemasonry and English *Welt-politik* had reinforced "America" in the Southern Hemisphere and practically cut the Spanish painter. With Pitt's deluded tool Miranda, whose career is a novel in itself, we are on our way to Bolivar and independence.

H. P. E.

A Friend in Need

A Letter from Grosvenor Square (HODDER AND STOUGHTON, 12/6) is a slight and modest narrative, overmuch dominated by the writer's loyal desire to give credit wherever it may be deserved rather than to claim it for himself. Perhaps the late JOHN G. WINANT was already tragically shadowed when he wrote this account of his stewardship, for although there is no direct suggestion here of anything approaching a surrender to despair, yet abundant evidence is unconsciously written into these pages to show that he was carrying a burden of effort and responsibility that may well have become insupportable for one of his gentle disposition. Reaching London on his high mission as Ambassador from America in the middle of an air-raid in February 1941, he shared thereafter at close quarters all the hazards of bombardment, the toils of daily emergency and the inmost councils of the Allied leaders. Though his story adds little to our knowledge of events it does wisely explain the British point of view to the writer's fellow countrymen and perhaps even to ourselves. One is irresistibly reminded in these chapters of his great predecessor in the 1914-1918 struggle—Walter Hines Page. Of all the miracles wrought for Britain's free survival not the least is that twice in desperate need she was granted advocacy so generous and so illuminating.

C. C. P.

La Comédie Humaine—Behind the Scenes

It is idle to speculate what might have been the stature of STEFAN ZWEIG's *Balzac* (CASSELL, 21/-) had its author lived to complete his book. As a youth ZWEIG recaptured in Vienna the first cosmopolitan enthusiasm accorded to Balzac. His last ten years fed a zest that had never wholly languished with copious—not to say plethoric—research. Mr. RICHARD FRIEDENTHAL, who has completed the biography from his friend's finished and unfinished drafts, has the right to say that, although not precisely what ZWEIG intended, it makes a fine coping-stone to his work. Actually its first half is more than this, its last half less. The formation of genius is always more interesting

than its deployment; and Balzac's wretched youth is highly significant. (At twenty his one patron was a little ironmonger who took the future author of the "Comédie Humaine" to the Comédie Française.) Given that the middle-aged Balzac slumped into a series of sordid love-affairs, one feels that the skill with which his youthful mind is analysed would have dealt better—had ZWEIF lived—with its last phosphoric gleams. "*Un grand arbre resèche le terrain autour de lui.*" Balzac himself was that kind of tree—and his *terrain* took its revenge. It is this nemesis of creative ruthlessness that, save by implication, the book misses.

H. P. E.

Those Were the Days.

In *Wayward Tendrils of the Vine* (CHAPMAN AND HALL, 30/-), Colonel IAN MAXWELL CAMPBELL, who played cricket with W. G., looks back happily over his long career as a wine merchant, and the tale of noble bottles reads like a dream in these waterlogged times—times which he believes to be saddened unnecessarily by the fancy prices French shippers are asking. Joining his father's business in 1889, he had the wonderful fortune to be sent to Bordeaux to cultivate his palate when the classic clarets of the '70's were beginning to be drunk. Small wonder that claret remained his love. Its devotees will find here a rich commentary. He gives the palm to the Lafite of '64. He is convinced the pre-phylloxera wines had a greater personality which made individuals easier to recognize. He has the comforting theory that war's neglect has a way of putting Nature on her mettle, as shown by the clarets of the early '70's, and that therefore those of the early '40's may prove remarkable. And he thinks '40 and '43 the most promising years to back. But, while claret has pride of place, he ranges liberally, modest of opinion and open-minded, and men who like their bottles to have round shoulders will be as informed and entertained as those who prefer them with the necks of giraffes by a book which often turns aside but generally to good purpose. It seems a pity that no more than seven hundred and fifty copies have been printed for sale.

E. O. D. K.

Digressive Topography

"By London we shall, when desirable, understand Southern England . . . And Yarmouth." It is in this lighthearted spirit that those discursive travellers Mr. HESKETH PEARSON and Mr. HUGH KINGSMILL approach the writing of "a book on London" of the same kind as their other two records of pilgrimages; the title *Talking of Dick Whittington* (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 10/6) being chosen because "it commits us to nothing." It is a book of talk, reminiscence, prejudice and criticism on a framework of topography, in which the talkers are engagingly assiduous to take themselves no more seriously than they take everybody and everything else; diversified as much with the names of restaurants and hotels as with those of well-known and less well-known people, and decorated with pleasant little drawings of London scenes and landmarks by Mrs. MARJORY WHITTINGTON. Between Fleet Street in July 1945 and Hampstead in July 1946 they range as far west as Worcester (to see Lord Baldwin) and as far north and east as Yarmouth (to discuss *David Copperfield*), and cover most parts of London (including West Ham, where they are perhaps slightly over-sensitive in believing themselves to be mistaken for detectives). They are the ideal pair for this kind of thing: Mr. KINGSMILL consistently inquisitive, Mr. PEARSON "loth to withhold information

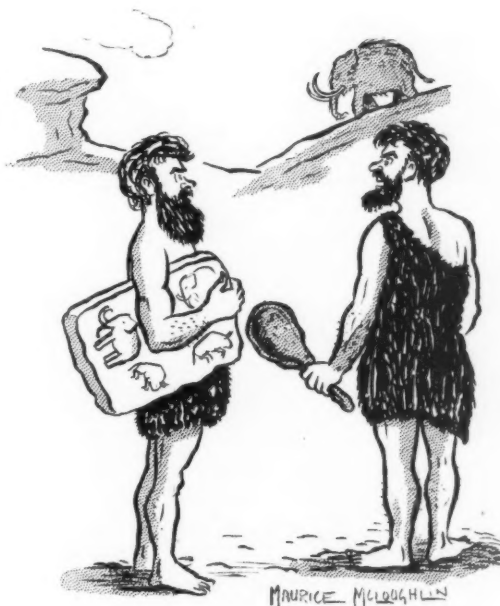
whether he possesses it or not," and both witty, disrespectful and full of literary and historical allusions. The reviewer is happy to be able to express honest pleasure, his appreciation rendered all the keener by the thought of the sort of figure he might expect to cut in their future books if he were not.

R. M.

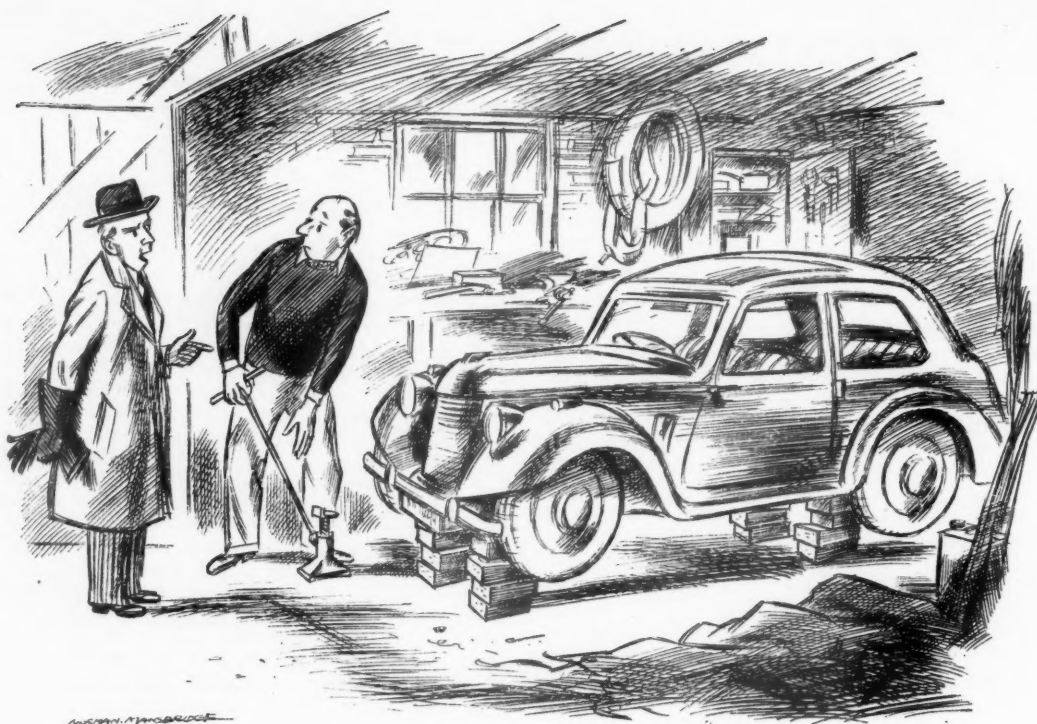
A Remarkable First Novel

The Prevalence of Witches (CHATTO AND WINDUS, 9/6), Mr. AUBREY MENEN's first novel, is set in a remote district in India, Limbo by name. The chief characters are the Political Officer, nicknamed Catullus for perhaps insufficient reasons, the Education Officer, who tells the story, an American missionary called Small, a bogus spiritual teacher, Swami Ananda, and the Limbodians themselves, who, as the American missionary puts it, inhabit a jungle "where everybody believes in witches and the spirits of the dead crowd around you so they don't give you elbow-room." An Indian judge, an old-fashioned nineteenth-century rationalist, comes to Limbo to try a native who has murdered a witch, and as Catullus and the Education Officer believe that the native killed the witch in all sincerity they conspire with the Swami to convince the Indian judge that the case must be dealt with from the Limbodian standpoint, which assumes a belief in the possession by human beings of supernatural powers. All this is ingeniously worked out, but, as often happens in brilliant first novels, the author's anxiety to express his general ideas on life through those characters who can most plausibly be accepted as on his own intellectual level delays and blurs the story. On these occasions the combined effect of Bernard Shaw and Aldous Huxley is discernible, just as, in the earlier and more delightful pages, one is reminded of Evelyn Waugh. But though coloured by these external influences, the book reveals an individual and original talent from which much may be expected.

H. K.



"Here's one—got the Permit?"



"I say, you ARE lucky—I can't get any bricks."

Forgotten Lines

IN decades when the years were longer
And the seasons more content
You could seek the sun in the hop-groves
By taking the old Mid-Kent;

You could dream day-dreams in a deer-park
When the oaks were showing green
If you took your heart and a ticket
On the leisurely Forest of Dean;

Or book by the Welshpool and Llanfair Light
To roam the Cambrian shires,
Or muse in the Clees with Drayton
By the Cleobury and Ditton Priors.

In the days when the miles were longer,
In the straths beyond the Forth
You took your world in a corner seat
Of the Highland or Scottish (North),

Or pilgrimaged through Arden
Dispensing the "flattering unction"—
A sixpence for the porter
On the Stratford and Midlands Junction.

The Cockermouth and Keswick,
The Brecon (for South Wales)
Were idle and enchanted
As the Dearne or the Yorkshire Dales.

The Lancashire and Yorkshire
Was a bustling line, methinks—
But the little Colne Valley and Halstead
Lulled the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincs.

But now that the miles are shorter,
From Dover to Clovelly,
From Lochalsh down to Penzance,
From Margate to Pwllheli

Whether we go by the Flying
Scot
Or sleep along the dale-ways
Or dawdle on the snail-ways
Or hurtle (standing, like as not)
Along the Royal Mail ways
You must give your tips to Sir Stafford
Cripps
When you travel by British Railways.

A Journalist Remembers.

XIV

PEET, of *Byre and Stall*, was never a man for whom I felt any great affection, but I well remember one occasion on which I found my dislike tempered to some degree by sympathy. It was at the time of that momentous shepherds' conference at which so much ridicule had been poured on the fantastic disproportion then existing between the numbers of shepherds, sheep-dogs and sheep. A single flock of sheep would sometimes be tended by no fewer than twenty shepherds and fifty dogs. Often neither shepherds nor dogs were familiar with their duties, and at the conference their bungling incompetence was the subject of some bitter harangues. Tales were told of shepherds penned willy-nilly in cow-sheds and hen-runs while their sheep roamed the mountain-side, of lonely farms invaded at night by crowds of bewildered men and barking dogs. A poultry-farmer, his voice shaking with anger, described how fifty of his best Rhode Island Reds had been rounded up and penned in the village hall, where a dance was in progress.

I had attended the conference to hear Mr. McGargle, editor of *The Plough*, speak on "Too Many Shepherds Chasing Too Few Sheep." His fire and impetuosity brought his audience to its feet, and when he had finished and I turned to go I had to fight my way to the exit through a crowd of shouting men and hysterical women. Outside the hall I saw Peet, scanning his note-book in apparent bewilderment. I would have hurried past, but he intercepted me, thrust out his book and pointed to a sentence with a shaking finger. "Read that," he said.

I took the book and read aloud: "The contours of a black-faced ewe were drawn out, by the fierce chemistry of my dreams, into insufferable splendour that fretted my heart."

"Did Mr. McGargle say that?" I asked in surprise.

"No," he replied. "Neither did I mean to write it."

I could make nothing of this and, being pressed for time, cut him short rather abruptly and hurried back to the office. A few days later, however, I happened to see him again, looking so pale and haggard that I felt bound to ask what was the matter.

"You will recall," he said, "that in answer to your weekly poetry feature in *The Plough* we have brought out a column dealing with famous prose writers. That was the beginning of

my misfortunes. I was given the task of writing the first article, the subject of which was De Quincey, and for some time I devoted myself to a thorough examination of his work. On the day after my article was completed I had occasion to visit a chemist's shop in order to buy a tooth-brush. To my complete stupefaction I heard myself ask the man for a pint of laudanum. That evening my landlady gave me a steak which I found to be very tough. I reprimanded her in Greek."

"What did she say?" I asked curiously.

"She said that it was all Greek to her," said Peet.

"Well," I said, "it is quite evident that you have thought too much of De Quincey."

"There are times," replied Peet fiercely, "when I am De Quincey. Only last night I took it into my head to 'stroll to St. Albans and back,' as I put it to myself. I was in a nice state when I got home, I can tell you. And then what must I do but spend an hour searching in a bemused fashion for a volume of Kant which I did not possess! My work is suffering, as you saw the other day. And the tea I swallow! Cup after cup! However, I must get back to the office and begin drawing up my 'Prolegomena to All Future Systems of Political Economy.'"

I must admit that I felt very sorry for Peet, and I lost no time in consulting Mr. McGargle as to what should be done.

"I have known similar cases in the past," said Mr. McGargle. "I myself, newly-appointed to the staff of *The Sculptor's Chronicle*, made an attempt to wall up Hamish McQuimpha in his own editorial sanctum after reading 'The Cask of Amontillado.' Then there was poor Roper, a reporter who joined the same paper shortly after I had reorganized it as *The Soil*. He was a keen student of history, and he suddenly took it into his head that he was one of the geese that saved the Capitol. Every night he used to raise an intolerable din, and his landlady was forced to give him notice. I dropped a hint that Christmas was not far away, and we heard no more of it. Tell Peet to practise moderation in all things, to retire early after taking two or three eggs beaten up in brandy, and to sleep with his head to the south-west."

I went next to Harvey McClutch, our chief reporter. His advice was that Peet should fling aside his books and,

as he put it, "abandon himself to the rhythm of the Eternal." "Let him," he said, "seek a position as an acrobat in some theatrical company. His whole mind will then be occupied in learning the various tricks and tumbles. If De Quincey turns a handspring into the big drum, be very sure that it is Peet who will crawl out."

With my head a confused jumble of geese, brandy and acrobats, I went in search of Peet and found him brandishing a single ticket to Grasmere and talking wildly about the Law of Diminishing Returns. I prevailed upon him to change his destination to some seaside resort, passed on as much as I could remember of the advice of Mr. McGargle and Mr. McClutch, and added on my own account that much might be done by a strenuous application to the work of some author other than De Quincey. Some time later I received a letter which I read with grave misgivings.

"Dear Monroe," wrote Peet, "Thanks to your excellent advice I am now well on the way to recovery. My only trouble since I left London has been a cold, which impeded the organs of respiration, and kept me many weeks in a state of great uneasiness; but by repeated phlebotomy it is now recovered."

Yours affectionately,
SAM. JOHNSON."

o o

This is Really Funny*

By Smith Minor

WHEN I told Green what I was going to call this article, he said, "I wouldn't," but I said, "Why not? It is."

"In that case they will find out for themselves," he said.

"You can't be sure," I said, "and anyhow it always helps one to know in advance."

"Then why don't you always tell them in advance?" he said.

"Because I don't think all my articles are funny," I said.

"They aren't," he said.

"Well, there you are," I said, "but this one is. You remember that poem by Rosetty that Mr. Throstle read out in class yesterday, if he hadn't begun by saying it was good, would we of known it?"

"You win," he said.

So I am calling this article what I have, even if it's a risqué.

It is about my aunt again, the one

* I hope. Author.

who lives alone and is not very well, some poeple thinking she is *un peu dotty*, but I not, and even if she was one wuold have to go on liking her jest the same. Anyhow it's easy to work out why she is like she is, if she is, becorse after all if the gentel reader had been dropped out of a pram at the age of two and rolled down a hill into a groser-shop, well, wuoldn't that have made him or her a bit gloomby?

As a matter of fact, it's made my aunt forgetful as well as gloomby, we working out that she properly got a bump on the part of the head you remember things with, so I wasn't surprised when she forgot my last birthday thouth she had sworn she wuoldn't. But a month afterwords she remembered it, and then she wrote to me as follows, *i.e.*:

"MY DEAR NEPHIEW,—I am so sorry I forgot your birthday, but now I have remembered it, and so I am inclosing you a pound with love from your old
AUNT JANE."

Only she had forgotten to inclose the pound!!

Well, it was a bit orkward. You see, shuold I write and tell her, or shuoldn't I? When I asked Green, he said,

"Of corse you shuold, why not?"

"Becorse, in a way, it wuold seam like asking for it," I said.

"In a way, it wuold be," he said, "but you wuold only be asking for what she thinks you've got, and how can you thank her for it if you haven't got it?"

"I see that," I said.

So what I did was to anwser her letter as follows, *i.e.*:

"MY DEAR AUNT,—Thank you most awfully for your letter, five bob wuold of been enoufh, but a whole pound, you can imagine how pleased I was, only there is jest one thing I ouht to mension, namely, *i.e.*, it wasn't there (the pound), I thinking you might want to know, and so inclosing a

stamped and addressed envelop in case you do. I hope your big toe is better.* With love, S. M."

Well, came her reply:..

"MY DEAR NEPHIEW,—How I lauffed! Why, do you know, if I forgot to inclose the pound, you forgot to inclose the envelop! But of corse I didn't nead that, so here is the pound, and so sorry I forgot last time, my toe is better, thank you, I only wish I cuold make it more, with love from your old
AUNT JANE."

In a way, it *was* more, becorse when I took out what she had inclosed I found it was what's called a washing-list!

"Well, now what?" I said to Green.

"This neads thort," he said.

"Well, think," I said.

So he did, and then he said,

"How about telling her you are returning her washing list, and inclosing last season's cricket averages?"

But I said, "I don't feal one ouht to do these things on purpose, I feal they ouht to jest hapen, that is, if they do."

"You are dead right," he said. "If your aunt had meant to inclose her washing-list it wuoldn't of been funny, but as she didn't mean to, it's this year's prize plumb."

"It might of been funny," I said, "but it wuoldn't of been fair."

"There are times, young Smith, when I fear for your fuchure," he said, "I don't know what he meant, "but anyhow, having acktually made your gloomby relative lauff, I think you ouht to try and keap the good work up, so why not return the list with a comic letter?"

"It mightn't be comic," I said.

"It's bound to be," he said.

"Well, perhaps, if you help me," I said.

So he did, and this is what we worked out, *i.e.*:

* It twiches in cold weather. Author.

"MY DEAR AUNT,—WHAT do you think you did *cette foire*? Or, rather, didn't? The inclosed is what you inclosed, that is, if I have! I expeckt the pound went to the Laundry, in wich case

'At least the note shuold come back clean,

This poem is not by me, but Green,' but if it dosen't, please don't worry or send another, becorse after all you meant to send it, and

"Thy kindly thort enoufh shuold be, This one is not by Green, but me,"
i.e., S. M."

Now what dose the gentel reader think hapened next? Did she send the pound, or didn't she, or did she say that she did but once again not? No! This was her next letter, honestly, it's the truth, *i.e.*:

"DEAR MADAM,—I've done such a silly thing, last Wenesday I put a pound note in the Laundry Basket instead of the washing-list, so now I am sending you the washing-list and will be glad if you will return me the pound note, it was meant for my nephiew and I've had to write and post him another, and please don't send back the nightdress as stiff as it was last time, I cuold hardly breathe in it,
Yours truly,
(Miss) J. SMITH."

When I showed it to Green he nearly swooned.

"What I'm wondering is what the Laundry got this morning," I said.

"It dosen't bare thinking of," he said. "There is only one way you will ever get that pound note, young Smith, and that's to go for it!"

Wich, the next day being a holiday, is what I did, and as my aunt had jest recieved two pounds back from the Laundry, she said I must have them both. I didn't want to, but she inscisted.

Well, anyway, now I shall be able to buy her a bumper Christmas present.

Here ends Mr. Punch's Two



Hundred and Thirteenth Volume

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SEND FOR LITERATURE TO THE PATENTEES—

MATHER & PLATT LTD. MANCHESTER 10

M. le Notaire est triste. Des voleurs lui ont soustrait 500,000 francs et la moitié d'une bouteille de Dubonnet. Courage, Notaire! La provision de Dubonnet augmente.

THIEVES FROM HIM HAVE ABSTRACTED 500,000
FRANCS AND HALF A BOTTLE
OF DUBONNET. CHEER UP NOTARY!
SUPPLIES OF DUBONNET ARE INCREASING.

Small shipments of Dubonnet are again reaching this country, and there is some hope that supplies may improve. Dubonnet should be served quite cold in a sherry glass, either neat or with gin. If your wine merchant can't sell you a bottle, ask very nicely for Dubonnet at your favourite bar.

DUBONNET

L'apéritif des connoisseurs

Bird Hints

BUDGIES DON'T LIKE DRAUGHTS

YOUR BUDGERIGAR'S CAGE should be hung in a light airy position, out of draughts, and where the temperature remains fairly even. Keep the cage scrupulously clean. Tydisan sanded sheets will enable you to do this with the least trouble. Fresh water should be given for drinking daily, and for bathing twice a week. The daily food should be CAPERNS BUDGERIGAR SEED.

If you have any bird problems, don't hesitate to write to CAPERNS ADVISORY SERVICE.

Caperns

BIRD SEEDS AND FOODS

in packets (Sealed) against dust

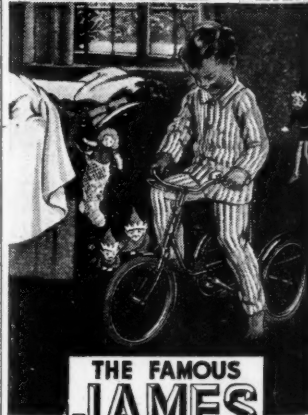


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"PIXIE" TRICYCLES for all AGES



THE JAMES CYCLE CO. LTD., BIRMINGHAM 1

This extract from the column of the City Editor of the 'Daily Express' is reproduced by the Guest, Keen & Nettlefolds Group of Companies as an example of the steps being taken by British Industry to overcome our present difficulties.

The City

DOWN at the East Moors, Cardiff plant of the (11,000,000 Guest Keen Baldwin) steel group are 500 happy steelmakers—happy because their "D" 100-ton thick steel furnace, recently converted to oil-firing, has just startled the world's steelmakers.

These 500 workers have set up a world steel record. In one week in August they had a steel "make" of 2,001 tons. Over the four-week period, their weekly average was 1,714 tons. Phenomenal, say the steel technicians.

This has never been bettered in America, where they have been making steel with oil-firing for 20 years. Guest Keen's men, pioneers

in oil-firing in Britain, have had only 18 months experience with oil-fired open-hearth furnaces.

Moreover, they are working with converted furnaces, designed largely to save coal rather than to achieve output records.

The East Moors men have one ambition—to show the world what they can do with a furnace actually designed for oil-firing.

The "D" furnace record is 500 tons more than the peak "make" in the traditional gas-fired furnace.

At Steel House, Westminister, the East Moors men's record is cheerful news for Sir Andrew Duncan and the other steel bosses. They were worried about the costs of the steel industry's switch to oil.

Their target for 1947 is to 1,500,000 tons of coal by being

some of these things, give the fastidious guest a collage of menu every-day days.

This ration is fed at milking times with, perhaps a double handful of scrubbed and chopped roots, such as turnips, mangolds, and

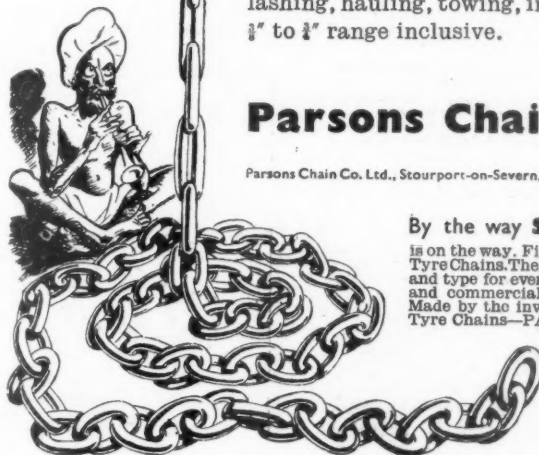
GKN

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Parsons

chain

trick?



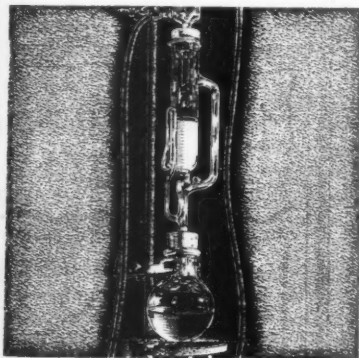
★ Fakir or no Fakir we can do our party piece at any time. We take a length of Parsons HIGH TEST Chain, subject it to a destruction test and, lo and behold, it elongates before breaking to a point at which the links bind on each other. An exclusive Parsons product, 50% stronger and 20% lighter than wrought iron chain. Available for lifting, lashing, hauling, towing, in $\frac{1}{2}$ " to $\frac{1}{2}$ " range inclusive.

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is on the way. Fit Parsons Tyre Chains. There's a size and type for every private and commercial vehicle. Made by the inventors of Tyre Chains—PARSONS



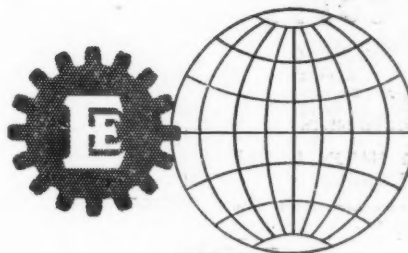
Treasure Trove

Hidden amid a mass of other matter may be a substance that the chemist particularly desires. In bygone days such a product was usually called a "quintessence", and the problem of extracting it is as old as chemistry itself.

Modern equivalents of the quintessence are such things as perfumes of flowers, drugs in seeds and resins, vitamins, and hormones. Their isolation is a difficult problem. One way is to find a liquid which will dissolve the required substance, but not those which accompany it. A solution is thus obtained, run off and boiled away, the residue being the substance desired. All sorts of liquids are used for 'extraction'—water, alcohol, ether, acetone, chloroform, benzene, and scores of others. Sometimes the substance will dissolve at ordinary temperatures, but heat is usually needed. Very often the best available solvent will only act slowly and with difficulty. When this happens, the chemist uses an extraction apparatus such as is shown above. The raw material is placed in a thimble of porous paper suspended in a tube above a flask containing the solvent. The solvent is boiled and its vapour passes into the condenser at the top. Here it is reconverted into liquid, drips into the thimble, and seeps through, carrying some of the substance to be extracted down into the flask. This cycle is allowed to continue until extraction is complete, and another quintessence has been extracted by the British chemist for the well-being of the nation.



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I get for
dinner?"

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M-W.56



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1/3
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CVS-19

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The Drayton "R.Q." is a 25-watt motor unit geared to a final shaft, to which may be fitted eccentrics, arms or cranks, gears, links or pulleys for actuating valves or dampers, movements, switchgear or other devices.

"R.Q." motors are available *unidirectional* or *reversing*, with or without self-switching, for 100/110 or 200/250 volts A.C.

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(R.Q.4)

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BRITAIN MUST MECHANISE

IT SEEMS LATE in the day to point out that where heavy loads have to be shifted and lifted, the motor is more powerful and more economical than the man. But who can deny that a substantial volume of man-hours is lost through primitive handling and trundling of raw materials and goods under process!

Yet Britain has a truck which, in the hands of one man, will handle up to 60 tons of heavy material in an hour; lifting, carrying, hoisting, stacking and loading; everywhere speeding production by saving money, labour, time and space. Learn more about it from Dept. J/T

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DO YOU KNOW what traffic is?



TRAFFIC is everyone on the roads, streets, and pavements. Whether walking, riding or driving, we are all part of it. Any one of us can cause an accident — or help to prevent one.

If everything went at one mile an hour, there might be no accidents. But, for all our sakes, traffic must *move* — as swiftly as is safe. Road Navigation (based on the Highway Code) is the art of getting about easily, swiftly and *safely* — and helping others to do the same. It's largely a matter of considering others on the road, as most of us do *off* the road.

If all drivers and riders were as good as some — and all walkers careful and considerate — traffic would flow faster, more smoothly, and above all, more safely. It will pay us all to become skilful Road Navigators.



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At the friendly Inn

Printed for The Brewers' Society

